

EXAMINING CONSUMER RACE, GENDER, AND AGE DIFFERENCES IN HOPE AND RECOVERY THROUGH NAMI'S IN OUR OWN VOICE PROGRAM

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The United States mental health system is in the process of transforming mental health care from treating and reducing symptoms to a relatively new focus on education, awareness, and optimal consumer recovery. The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) developed the In Our Own Voice (IOOV) program where consumers present their mental illness and recovery stories as a direct educational and indirect anti-stigma tool. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact that NAMI's IOOV Program has on consumer hope and recovery attitudes. Questionnaires were distributed to four NAMI sites throughout the United States and given to consumers ($n = 118$) both before and after the IOOV program. The Recovery Expectations Scale, an adaptation of the Consumer Optimism Scale, was used to measure consumer recovery attitudes. The Snyder State Hope Scale was used to measure state level hope, with agency and pathways subscales. After the intervention, we hypothesized that younger consumers, females, and Caucasians would report greater increases in their hope and expectations for recovery. Contrary to hypotheses, overall state-level hope remained the same throughout the program. Examination of gender differences in hope agency reveals trends, in which females decrease and males only slightly increase after viewing the program. Trends towards significance are also indicated in hope pathways, in which African Americans reported decreased pathways and Caucasians reported increased pathways. In addition, recovery expectations, improved overall, with no significant differences in improvement among demographic variables. Implications of these findings and their importance for consumer recovery programs are discussed.